

Learning the Hard Way

Lesson Five: Daniel Four

Introduction:

A. Job 33:14-17

1. This is how God often speaks to men where they do not have open Bibles to give them a clear revelation of His will.
2. Chapter four is for anyone who needs to know that God can perform miracles in hearts hardened against Him.
3. This story is an incredible account of the pride of a man and the sovereignty of God, and the extent God will go to prove His authority and grace.

B. Remember that Jesus said that Daniel was a prophet and prophesied concerning future events. (Matthew 24:15)

1. In Nebuchadnezzar we see a picture of all Gentile power – its departure from God, its degradation and bestial character and its final subjection to God in the time of the end.
2. Romans 13:1 reminds us that “**powers are ordained of God.**” However, Psalms 49:12 says, “**Man being in honor doesn’t last forever, he is like beasts that perish.**”
3. Nebuchadnezzar’s madness represents the turning away of the nations from God and the corruption of governments to serve human needs.
4. The day draws near when God will assert Himself and all Gentile dominion will come to an end.

WHAT IS HERE FOR US?

A. Daniel 4:17

1. This verse organizes God’s message to man.
2. All three clauses contain essential truth we need to learn.

- B. Pride is the sin at the top of God's hate list.
 - 1. Proverbs 6:16-19
 - 2. Pride is an exaggerated and dishonest self-evaluation. (Mark 7:20-23)
 - 3. It wasn't that Nebuchadnezzar thought that he was talented – it was that he saw himself as the source of his talent.
 - 4. The sin of pride rears its head when we fail to acknowledge that God is the source of all good gifts.
 - 5. James summarizes God's evaluation of pride in 4:6 saying, "**God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.**"
- C. When God was through with Nebuchadnezzar, he filed his report. (4:37)

THE KING AND HIS DREAM!

- A. The first three verses of this chapter tell that the account we are about to hear are the king's own words.
 - 1. Daniel 4:1 "**...all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth**".
 - 2. Daniel 4:2 He explains his mysterious absence from the throne and why he chooses to announce it.
 - 3. Daniel 4:3 He summarizes his attitude after the events of chapter four.
 - 4. The rest of the story is about the radical change of his perspective and his change in worldview.
- B. The description of the dream.
 - 1. The vision of the king.
 - 2. The Watcher and Holy One
- C. The intention of the one who came down from heaven.
 - 1. That all men may know that the Most High rules over the earth.
 - 2. That God gives the kingdom of men to whom he desires.

3. That God sets up the basest men to rule over the family of mankind.

THE PROPHET AND HIS INTERPRETATION

A. The dream's explanation

1. The tree represents the king (vs. 20-22).
2. The destruction of the tree and the transformation of the stump into an irrational beast depicts what would happen in his future (vs. 25-26).

B. Daniel's confrontation of Nebuchadnezzar

1. Compassionate confrontation (v.27).
2. Daniel did not divorce truth from responsibility.

THE LORD AND HIS DISCIPLINE (V.28)

A. Time and circumstances erode accomplishments which makes pride absurd.

1. The king did not heed the advice of the prophet.
2. Nebuchadnezzar walking in pride (vs. 29-33).

B. Be careful not to mistake God's silence.

RESTORATION OF THE KING

A. The first thirty-three verses illustrate that God resists the proud, but the last four verses demonstrate that He also gives grace to the humble.

1. Without resentment the king praised God (vs. 34-35).
2. The second thing that he did was to acknowledge God's sovereignty (v.35b).
3. The third thing was to give joyful witness to all peoples of the marvelous grace of God (vs.1-3).
4. He closes his decree with words of adoration and insight (v.37).

B. Conclusion:

1. God's judgment may be slow, but it is certain (Eccl. 8:11).

2. God will go to great length to show that He is the Lord.
3. Must keep in mind that Daniel is a Book of Prophecy.
 - In light of that prophetic nature of the book Nebuchadnezzar is a representative of world government and man's effort at governing himself in every age of man's dominion.
 - Toward the end of this age the Antichrist will attempt a world federation and make promises that he cannot keep.
 - When that time comes the pride of man will reach its apex. Have we reached that place?
4. God is in control of what man cannot control.
5. Man's power is fragile.
6. Man's wisdom is limited.
7. Human accomplishments are always in jeopardy.
8. God promises a kingdom for the lowliest.